



# SAN JOAQUIN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

MEETING TODAY'S PROBLEMS / PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

September 22, 1999

CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Attention: Rick Breitenbach

Dear CALFED,

The San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation has reviewed the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation has extreme concerns about this proposed program.

CALFED will have a negative impact on San Joaquin County agriculture if this cooperative effort by State and Federal bureaucracies continue down its current path. San Joaquin County agriculture will be affected by all decisions made by CALFED, particularly with respect to water quality, levee system integrity, and the potential to convert the largest amount of farmland acreage for only habitat purposes. CALFED must return to its basic mission: coordinate a plan to assure reliable, high-quality water for California's people while addressing bay-delta environmental problems.

CALFED has been ignoring California environmental law by its failure to study this impact and by its failure to identify alternatives. Without this information of how CALFED plans to mitigate for lost agriculture land, CALFED cannot move forward with this current program. Any attempt to violate environmental law will be subject to legal challenge.

California's water storage system needs to be expanded to allow additional yielding storage that will increase water availability to all uses. The creation of additional water storage to provide increased reserves for flexibility in diverting water from the delta as well as controlling the overdraft of groundwater from underground aquifers must be a priority for CALFED. Any water development project should give high priority to the development and protection of agricultural land.

Groundwater storage as an option must be handled properly and within full recognition of existing state water law and with full adherence of protecting groundwater rights holders. If water is to be stored in an underground aquifer, in a CALFED sponsored, funded, or promoted program or project, that effort must be in complete control of and supported by local controlling entities. No effort to promote outside entities into groundwater aquifers at the detriment of local land owners, the groundwater rights holders, will be excepted within this CALFED program. This point is clearly based on the principles that CALFED can not make things better in one area at the expense of another area.

CALFED must remember that all existing water rights must be inviolate. Any attempt to violate those rights will be subject to legal challenges. In order for this proposed plan to work, CALFED must develop additional water supplies from streams in California by the most economically feasible projects, within the scope of the California Water Plan and California Water Law.

CALFED's proposed Bay-Delta Program will have a negative impact on San Joaquin County demand for water because it covers both the protected Delta areas and export areas. There must be additional yielding water storage facilities created quickly or agriculture will be the first to suffer when the next drought occurs. CALFED must honor what they have originally stated as one of their founding principles—not to make things better in one area at the expense of another area. This program will have a negative impact on San Joaquin County if new yielding water storage is not developed to meet the needs of all parties in California.

CALFED is aware of the growing need for urban water supply and urban water quality as the population grows. Agriculture, which is the number one industry in San Joaquin County, was never considered for an increasing need of water to produce food and crops as California prepares to grow and the world prepares to support another billion people. Water quality for agricultural must be addressed by creating additional water storage to keep river flows sufficient for riparian users along the river to receive water throughout the entire year without the threat of salt intrusion or below average flows.

San Joaquin County is lined with miles of levees in the Delta Region. CALFED has proposed to create setback levees and remove thousands of acres of farmland for environmental purposes. This would not only hurt agriculture but will also affect California's economy by producing fewer crops and raising the price of produce in our local markets. CALFED must respect the presence of agriculture and the negative affects it would create if land were lost. CALFED needs to concentrate on the current levees themselves by maintaining or rebuilding any damages to today's system. Dredging silted channels in the Delta must be a high priority to increase water flow in the delta.

The San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation urges that the issues raised today need to be addressed adequately. CALFED must return to its basic mission: coordinate a plan to assure reliable, high-quality water for California's people while addressing bay-delta environmental problems. Agriculture is part of California. It is important that we protect our future, our farmers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Loren C. Ohm  
President

cc: San Joaquin Board of Supervisors  
San Joaquin Farm Bureau Board of Directors  
California Farm Bureau Federation Legal Council  
Governor Gray Davis  
Representative Richard Pombo  
Representative Gary A. Condit  
Senator Patrick Johnston  
Senator Dick Monteith  
Assemblyman Dennis Cardoza  
Assemblyman Mike Machado  
Assemblyman Anthony Pescetti